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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4184
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0215
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0103
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RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ3/SCJ33/SCJ34/SOCSO LNO//
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 000445

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NSC FOR SUE CRONIN
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD BARBARA MOORE
NAIROBI FOR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PA](#)
SUBJECT: PARAGUAY: PRESIDENT REPLACES MILITARY LEADERS IN
ATTEMPT TO BREAK STALEMATE WITH OPPOSITION

REF: A. ASUNCION 0371 AND PRECEDING
[1](#)B. ASUNCION 0001
[1](#)C. 05 ASUNCION 1560
[1](#)D. 05 ASUNCION 1548
[1](#)E. ASUNCION PA IIR 6 875 0030 05
[1](#)F. ASUNCION PA IIR 6 875 0014 05

Classified By: PolOff Mark A. Stamilio, reason 1.4(d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: On April 23, President Duarte replaced the commanders of the three military services and several other senior military leaders, including Colonel Heriberto Galeano, the controversial Commander of the Presidential Escort Regiment. He did not replace Military Forces Commander General Jose Kanazawa. The leadership changes were a belated response to the opposition's call for the removal of those responsible for a December Military Forces communique that criticized the Senate for delaying a vote on senior military and police promotions. Duarte also is seeking to break a broader stalemate between his administration and the opposition that, for the last two months, has precluded movement on key legislation. The opposition has described the changes as insufficient to address their concerns or meet their demands. End Summary.

Who's In, Who's Out

[1](#)2. (U) On April 23, President Duarte replaced Army Commander Lieutenant General Ruben Alviso, Air Force Commander General Roberto Vera, and Navy Commander Rear Admiral Miguel Caballero. Alviso and Vera will be forced to retire. Caballero, on the other hand, will replace Army Lieutenant General Leonor Godoy as head of the Military Forces Logistics Command. Colonel Heriberto Galeano, the controversial Commander of the Presidential Escort Regiment (REP), will leave the REP to command the Army's 1st Infantry Division. Lieutenant Colonel Juan Jose Casaccia, the head of Duarte's REP personal security detachment, will replace Galeano as REP Commander. Duarte did not replace Military Forces Commander General Jose Kanazawa.

Political Stalemate Likely to Continue

13. (SBU) The leadership changes were a belated response to the opposition's call for the removal of those responsible for a December Military Forces communique that criticized the Senate for delaying a vote on senior military and police promotions and generated a firestorm of debate (ref D). The opposition interpreted the communique to be a threat and a challenge to the Legislative Branch's authority and independence. Duarte eventually assumed responsibility for the communique, in an attempt to provide Kanazawa and the Military Forces political cover.

14. (SBU) Duarte also is seeking to break a broader stalemate between his administration and the opposition. The military promotions controversy, the Colorado Party's attempt to extend a Supreme Court Minister's term for five years, and the designation of a controversial Ambassador to Cuba left Congress without a quorum in December (ref B). Since then, Duarte's legal maneuver to secure and temporarily assume the Colorado Party Presidency (ref A) and his focus on pursuing reelection further galvanized the opposition. In addition to the removal of military leaders, the opposition has demanded the resignation of the five Supreme Court Ministers who facilitated Duarte's bid for the Colorado Party Presidency, transparent accounting of funds generated by the country's lucrative hydroelectric dams, and progress on several state reform measures.

15. (SBU) The stalemate has precluded movement on key legislation, including an important anti-money laundering bill pending before Congress. The opposition continues to block votes on military and police promotions, ambassadorial and consular appointments, and millions of dollars in potential assistance from international lenders. Additionally, they boycotted the recent visit of Chilean

President Michelle Bachelet, and plan to boycott the upcoming visit of Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian.

16. (SBU) It is not apparent that Duarte's gesture will help to resolve the current impasse. The opposition continues to call for the removal of Military Forces Commander General Kanazawa, whom they consider ultimately responsible for the December communique, as well as the retirement (versus reassignment) of Admiral Caballero and Colonel Galeano, as a precondition to a vote on the military promotions list. They also insist that the government meet the demands listed in paragraph 4, above, before they will enter into earnest consideration of other administration initiatives.

Galeano's Future Uncertain

17. (C) Comment: Colonel Galeano's inclusion on the military promotion list was one of the reasons for the Senate's decision to delay its vote in December. Galeano maintains a close relationship with President Duarte, and is accused of wiretapping opposition members (ref C). He also exercises power and influence well above his rank, has ambitiously sought to strengthen the REP at the expense of the rest of the military, and is accused of involvement in corrupt activities (refs E and F). His removal as REP Commander may signal that his influence is waning. As REP Commander he reported directly to the President and commanded 1,000 of the military's best trained and equipped personnel. As 1st Infantry Division Commander, he will report to the new Army Commander and General Kanazawa, giving them a measure of control over him, and will command only 250 troops. On the other hand, the move places Galeano in a general officer position, which may signal Duarte's intention to promote him later, after breaking the current stalemate.

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